

EURIPIDES

FRAGMENTS

Aegeus-Meleager

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
CHRISTOPHER COLLARD
AND
MARTIN CROPP



Z1/L822:504

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MELANIPPE WISE

Melanippe ('Black-Mare') belongs to the complicated mythology of Thessaly and Boeotia, but her story is obscure in origin and varies considerably in extant accounts; her only notable appearance in Greek poetry is in Euripides' plays. According to the incomplete hypothesis and prologue of Melanippe Wise (test. i and F 481 below), she was a daughter of Aeolus (ancestor of the Aeolian Greeks) and Hippo or Hippē ('Mare', a daughter of the centaur Chiron), and mother by Poseidon of twins named Aeolus (identified with migrant Aeolians) and Boeotus (identified with Boeotia)—though in some genealogies the mother of these twins was Arne rather than Melanippe. Melanippe Wise, so called because of the wisdom its heroine inherited from Chiron and Hippo and displayed in the play (test. i, iia, F 482–4), was about the illicit birth and survival of the twins (cf. the plots of Alope, Auge, Danae, and probably Sophocles' first Tyro). Melanippe was seduced or raped by Poseidon in her father's absence, and when he returned she hid her recently born sons in a stable where herdsmen discovered them and brought them to Aeolus, superstitiously thinking they were the unnatural offspring of a cow. Aeolus' father Hellen agreed and encouraged him to destroy them, but Melanippe defended them by arguing rationally that they must be the natural children of an unidentified girl. This

early part of the play—probably the prologue and first two or three episodes—is represented by test. i-iiia and F 482-5, and by a magnificent Apulian vase published in 1986 (LIMC no. 1 = test. iv; Todisco Ap 221, Taplin no. 68) which is the only known 'illustration' of the play; it pictures a herdsman showing the twins to Hellen in Aeolus' presence while Melanippe and her nurse observe from one side. The remainder of the plot is almost completely unknown, the only other certain fragments being F 486 (a choral praise of justice), F 487 (probably Melanippe protesting her innocence), and test. va mentioning a horse mask worn by Hippo, presumably in a divine intervention at the end of the play (the Apulian vase painting includes Melanippe's half-brother Cretheus crowning a horse which may possibly represent Hippo; Kannicht includes Cretheus as a character in the play). It must be assumed that, as in other plays on this pattern, Melanippe's guilt was somehow revealed and she and her sons subjected to further suffering. Melanippe Captive presupposes that they were all somehow brought to southern Italy, like Telephus and Auge to Mysia, Danae and Perseus to Seriphos; but this does not necessarily reflect Melanippe Wise (that the two plays were part of the same production is a possibility, but no more than that: see below on the dates of the two plays). Hyginus' syncretic and rather confused Fab. 186 (= Melanippe Captive test. iii) begins by saying that Melanippe's father blinded and imprisoned her and exposed her infant sons who were then suckled by a cow and raised by herdsmen, but again the relevance of this to Melanippe Wise is doubtful; it seems more likely that Hippo appeared in time to rescue both mother and sons from further violence.

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Brief fragments: none specifically ascribed to Melanippe Wise. Other ascriptions: Melanippe F 497, 500, 506, 508–10 (see notes to the translations below), and F 514 'Adonis gardens' (young plants allowed to die in honour of Adonis, perhaps a metaphor for the condemned babies in this play); also F 928, 1004.

Quotations in Aristophanes' plays of 411 (F 482, 487) show that Melanippe Wise was composed before that year, while its trimeter resolutions make a date earlier than the mid-420s somewhat unlikely (Cropp–Fick 83–4); it probably preceded its 'sequel' Melanippe Captive. Melanippe's cleverness and rhetorical skill made her a 'pernicious woman' for Aristophanes (Women at the Thesmophoria 546–8 = test. iiib), and an example of unsuitable characterization for Aristotle (Poetics 1454a22–31 = test. iiia). The later testimonia show that the play remained noted for these features, but there is no evidence of a wider afterlife except a Latin version by Ennius, of which six brief fragments survive.

Bibliography: see p. 567.

ΜΕΛΑΝΙΠΠΗ Η ΣΟΦΗ

test. i (Hypothesis)

Με[λανίππη ἡ Σοφή, ἥς ἀρχή·
Ζεὺς δ. [

[ἡ δὲ ὑπόθεσις·]

- Ἕλληνας τοῦ Διὸς Αἰόλος τεκνωθεὶς
- 5 ἐκ μὲν Εὐρυδίκης ἐγέννησε Κρηθέα καὶ
Σαλμωνέα καὶ Σίσυφον, ἐκ δὲ τῆς Χείρωνος
θυγατρὸς Ἰππης κάλλει διαφέρουσαν
Μελανίππην. αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν φόνον
ποιήσας ἐπ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἀπῆλθε φυγὰς,
- 10 τὴν δὲ Μελανίππην Ποσειδῶν διδύμων
παίδων ἔγκυν ἐποίησεν. ἡ δὲ διὰ τὴν προσ-
δοκίαν τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς παρουσίας τοὺς γεν-
νηθέντας εἰς τὴν βούστασιν ἔδωκε τῇ
τροφῇ θεῖναι κατὰ τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ κα-
- 15 τασπείραντος. ὑπὸ δὲ τὴν κάθοδον τοῦ
δυνάστου τὰ βρέφη τινὲς τῶν βουκόλων
φυλαττόμενα μὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ ταύρου, θη-
λαζόμενα δὲ ὑπὸ μιᾶς τῶν βοῶν ἰδόντες,
ὡς βουγενῇ τέρατα τῷ βασιλεῖ προσή-
- 20 νεγκαν. ὁ δὲ τῇ τοῦ πατρὸς Ἕλληνας γνώ-
μη πεισθεὶς ὀλοκαυτοῦν τὰ βρέφη κρί-

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test. i (Hypothesis)

Me(lanippe Wise, which begins,) 'Zeus . . . (remainder of first line lost: cf. F 481.1 below) . . .'; (the plot is as follows):

Aeolus, son of Hellen son of Zeus, fathered Cretheus, Sal- 5
moneus and Sisyphus by Eurydice, and by Chiron's daughter
Hippe (he fathered) the exceedingly beautiful Melanippe.
Now he himself went into exile for a year after committing a
murder, and Poseidon made Melanippe pregnant with twin 10
sons. Expecting her father's return, she gave the infants she
had borne to her nurse to put in the ox-stable, as their father
(i.e. Poseidon) had instructed. About the time of the king's re-
turn, some of the herdsmen saw the babies being watched 15
over by the bull and suckled by one of the cows, and think-
ing they were the cow's monstrous offspring they brought
them to the king. He took his father Hellen's advice and de- 20
cided to burn the babies alive, and so he instructed his daugh-

P. Oxy. 2455, ed. E. Turner (1962), frs. 1-2 (parts of vv. 1-2, 5-19); P. Leiden inv. 145, ed. R. Daniel (1991: parts of vv. 18-23); vv. 4-25: Ioannes Logothetes, Commentary on [Hermogenes], *Means of Rhetorical Effectiveness* (ed. H. Rabe, *RhM* 63 [1908], 145), 28; Gregory of Corinth, Commentary on the same treatise, *Rhet. Gr.* VII.1313 Walz. See also van Rossum-Steenbeek 199, 206-7, Diggle, *TrGFS* 120. v. 2 = F 481.1

- νας Μελανίππη τῇ θυγατρὶ προσέταξεν
 ἔνταφίους αὐτὰ κοσμήσαι. ἡ δὲ καὶ τὸν
 κόσμον αὐτοῖς ἐπέθηκε καὶ λόγον εἰς
 25 παραίτησιν ἐξέθηκε φιλότιμον.

test. iia

ἡ Μελανίππη σοφὴ . . . ἐπιγέγραπται μὲν Σοφῇ, ὅτι φιλοσοφεῖ, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τοιαύτης μητρός ἐστίν, ἵνα μὴ ἀπίθανος ᾖ ἡ φιλοσοφία . . . ἡ δὲ Μελανίππη ἐπεράνθη μὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος, γέγονε δὲ ταύτῃ παιδίᾳ· ἐξέθηκεν δὲ αὐτὰ εἰς τὰ τοῦ πατρὸς βουφόρβια. ὁ δὲ πατὴρ ἡγείται ἐκ βοῶς εἶναι, καὶ ὥς τέρας βούλεται κατακαῦσαι. βοηθοῦσα αὐτῇ ἡ Μελανίππη ἀποφαίνεσθαι πειράται, ὅτι τέρας οὐδέν ἐστιν. οὕτω τὸ δρᾶμα ὅλον ἐσχημάτισται καὶ ἅμα διδάσκει ἡμᾶς Εὐριπίδης, ὅτι τὸν σχηματίζοντα ἐγγυτάτω δεῖ εἶναι τοῦ λύσαι τὸ σχῆμα μετὰ τῆς ἀσφαλείας τοῦ σχήματος. περιερχομένη γὰρ πάσας αἰτίας τοῦ σῶσαι τὰ παιδιά λέγει, 'εἰ δὲ παρθένος φθαρεῖσα ἐξέθηκε τὰ παιδιά . . . σὺ φόνον δράσεις;' (= F 485)· ὥστε καὶ τὸ αὐτῆς πρᾶγμα λέγει ἐν σχήματι συμβουλῆς.

[Dionysius of Halicarnassus], *Art of Rhetoric* 9.11 (and more briefly in 8.10 = test. iib)

test. va

τὰ δ' ἔκσκενα πρόσωπα Ἀκταίων ἐστὶ κερασφόρος, ἡ Φινεὺς τυφλός . . . ἡ Ἴππη ἡ Χείρωνος ὑπαλλαττομένη εἰς ἵππον παρ' Εὐριπίδῃ . . .

Pollux 4.141

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ter Melanippe to dress them in funeral clothing. Melanippe clothed them and made a feisty speech in their defence.

test. iia

The *Melanippe Wise* has the title 'Wise' because she argues philosophically, and she is the daughter of such a mother (i.e. Hippo) so that her philosophizing will not be implausible . . . Melanippe was raped by Poseidon and gave birth to sons whom she put in her father's ox-stable. Her father thinks they are a cow's offspring and wants to burn them as a monstrosity. Melanippe defends herself and tries to show that they are no monstrosity. Thus the whole action of the play is disguised; and Euripides teaches us that the disguiser should come very close to revealing the disguise while still maintaining it. For while going through all the reasons for sparing the children she says, 'But if a girl who had been raped exposed the children . . . will you then commit murder?' (= F 485 below). Thus she actually pleads her own case in the guise of giving advice.

test. va

Special masks are Actaeon wearing horns, or Phineus blind . . . or Chiron's daughter Hippe transformed into a horse in Euripides . . .

test. vb (a) (~ F 488 N)

Ἴππος· . . . Ἄρατος μὲν οὖν φησὶ τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἑλικῶνος εἶναι ποιήσαντα κρήνην τῇ ὀπλῇ . . . , ἄλλοι δὲ τὸν Πήγασον εἶναι . . . , Εὐριπίδης δὲ ἐν τῇ Μελανίππῃ Ἴππῳ εἶναι τὴν Χείρωνος καὶ ἀπατηθεῖσαν ὑπ' Αἰόλου φθαρῆναι, καὶ ἕως μὲν τινὸς κρύπτειν, ἐπειδὴ δὲ καταφανῆς ἦν διὰ τὸν ὄγκον τῆς γαστροῦς, φυγεῖν εἰς τὰ ὄρη· κακεῖ ὠδινούσης αὐτῆς τὸν πατέρα ἐλθεῖν κατὰ ζήτησιν, τὴν δὲ εὗξασθαι καταλαμβανομένην πρὸς τὸ μὴ γνωσθῆναι μεταμορφωθῆναι καὶ οὕτως γενέσθαι ἵππον τεκοῦσαν τὸ παιδίον· διὰ δὲ τὴν εὐσέβειαν αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς εἰς τὰ ἄστρα ὑπὸ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος τεθῆναι.

Schol. on Aratus, *Phaenomena* 205; similarly [Eratosthenes], *Catasterisms* 18 and in Latin (stating Artemis' role differently: see note opposite) Hyginus, *Astronomy* 2.18 (= test. vb (b)).

480

Ζεὺς, ὅστις ὁ Ζεὺς, οὐ γὰρ οἶδα πλὴν λόγῳ . . .

Plutarch, *Moralia* 756b; Lucian 21.41; [Justin], *On Monarchy* 5.8

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test. vb (a) (~ F 488 N)

The Horse (i.e. the constellation): . . . Aratus says it is the horse that made the spring on Mount Helicon (i.e. Hippocrene) with its hoof . . . , others that it is Pegasus . . . , and Euripides in *Melanippe* says it is Chiron's daughter Hippo, and that she was deceived and raped by Aeolus, and concealed it for a time, but when her pregnancy became evident because of the swelling of her belly she fled to the mountains; while she was in labour there her father came in search of her, and as she was caught she prayed to be transformed so as not to be recognized; thus she became a horse after giving birth to her child, and because of her and her father's piety she was placed by Artemis amongst the stars.¹

¹ The explanation of Hippo's horse transformation is not Euripidean; contrast F 481.14–19 below. Her catasterism may be, but the mythographic sources are confused. Hyginus, *Astronomy* 2.18 attributes her prophetic activities and punishment to other authors (unnamed), and connects Artemis with Callimachus, not Euripides.

480

Zeus, whoever Zeus is—for I know this only by report . . .¹

¹ Plutarch claims this was the play's original first line and was replaced by F 481.1 because it caused offence, but it is very unlikely that such a sceptical statement (cf. *Heracles* 1263) opened this or any other tragedy.

(Beginning of the play)

ΜΕΛΑΝΙΠΠΗ

- Ζεὺς, ὥς λέλεκται τῆς ἀληθείας ὑπο,
 Ἕλλην' ἔτιχθ' ὃς ἐξέφυσεν Αἴολον·
 οὐ χθών, ὅσῃν Πηνειὸς Ἀσωποῦ θ' ὕδωρ
 ὑγροῖς ὀρίζων ἐντὸς ἀγκῶσι στέγει,
 5 σκλήπτρων ἀκούει πᾶσα καὶ κυκλήσκεται
 ἐπώνυμος χθών Αἰολὶς τοῦμοῦ πατρός.
 ἐν μὲν τόδ' ἐξέβλασται Ἕλληνας γένος·
 πτόρθον δ' ἀφῆκεν ἄλλον εἰς ἄλλην πόλιν
 < >
 κλεινὰς Ἀθήνας Ξοῦθον, ᾧ νύμφη ποτὲ
 10 θυγάτηρ Ἐρεχθέως Κεκροπίας ἐπ' αὐχένι
 Ἴων' ἔτικτεν. ἀλλ' ἀνοιστέος λόγος
 †ὄνομά τε τοῦμόν† κείσ' ὅθενπερ ἠρξάμην.
 καλοῦσι Μελανίππην <με>, Χείρωνος δέ με
 ἔτικτε θυγάτηρ Αἰόλῳ· κείνην μὲν οὖν
 15 ξανθῇ κατεπτέρωσεν ἱππεῖα τριχὶ
 Ζεὺς, οὐνεχ' ὕμνους ἦδε χρησμοδοῦς βροτοῖς
 ἄκη πόνων φράζουσα καὶ λυτήρια.

Ioannes Logothetes (see under test. i above); vv. 1–2 (ἔτικτεν):
 Gregory of Corinth (see under test. i above); v. 1: Aristophanes,
Frogs 1244 with Schol. (see also test. i.2 above); v. 11 (last three
 words): Plutarch, *Moralia* 390c and 431a (= F 970 N)

8–9 lacuna proposed by Wilamowitz 12 ἐπ' ὄνομα
 τοῦμόν Wilamowitz

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481

(Beginning of the play)

MELANIPPE

Zeus, as is told by reliable tradition,¹ fathered Hellen who was father to Aeolus. All of the land that Peneus and Asopus bound and enclose within their watery arms² acknowledges his rule and is named Aeolia after my father. 5 This is one of the families that descended from Hellen, and he sent forth other offspring to other areas . . . (*probably a line or two lost*) . . . ³ to glorious Athens Xuthus, whose bride, Erechtheus's daughter, bore Ion to him on Cecropia's ridge.⁴ 10

But I must bring my account †and my name†⁵ back to where I started from. My name is Melanippe; Chiron's daughter bore me to Aeolus. Now Zeus gave her a coat of tawny horse-hair because she sang oracular songs to men, 15 telling them cures and ways to relieve their pains;⁶ and

¹ The first line (partially preserved at the start of test. i above) is identical with Critias' or Euripides' *Pirithous*, F 1.9 (see Appendix at the end of this edition). Such a repetition is not unlikely.

² Thessaly was bounded to the north by the river Peneus, and Boeotia to the south by the Asopus.

³ Wilamowitz's lacuna allows for a mention of Dorus, traditionally brother of Aeolus and Xuthus, who migrated to Doris and became the ancestor of the Dorians.

⁴ The Acropolis of Athens, where the royal palace of heroic times was supposed to have been. In *Ion* Euripides made Apollo Ion's real father.

⁵ Probably corrupt, though accepted by some as '(the explanation of) my name'. Wilamowitz's conjecture leaves the sentence slightly incoherent ('to my name, to where . . .').

⁶ Hippo is described as an *iatromantis* or 'healing seer', like Asclepius (also punished for usurping divine prerogatives) in Pindar, *Pythians* 3.45-53.

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πυκνῇ θνέλλη δ' αἰθέρος διώκεται
 Μουσεῖον ἐκλιπούσα Κωρύκιόν τ' ὄρος.
 20 νύμφη δὲ θεσπιωδὸς ἀνθρώπων ὕπο
 Ἴππῶν κέκληται σώματος δι' ἀλλαγάς.
 μητρὸς μὲν ὧδε τῆς ἐμῆς ἔχει πέρι.

εἶτα λέγει καὶ ὅτι Ποσειδῶνι μιγείσα τέτοκε τοὺς διδύ-
 μους παῖδας.

482 (= 483 N)

ΜΕΛΑΝΙΠΠΗ

ἐγὼ γυνὴ μὲν εἰμι, νοῦς δ' ἔνεστί μοι.

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 1124 with Schol.

483 (= 482 N)

<ΜΕΛΑΝΙΠΠΗ>

ἥ πρῶτα μὲν τὰ θεῖα προμαντεύσατο
 χρησμοῖσι σαφέσιν ἀστέρων ἐπ' ἀντολαῖς.

Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 1.15.73.5; Cyril of Alex-
 andria, *Against Julian* 4 (PG LXXVI.705c)

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driven in a dense squall of mist she left the Corycian mountain,⁷ her place of inspiration. This young prophetess is called by men Hippo because of her change of body. 20
Such are the facts concerning my mother.

Then she adds that she (Melanippe) has had intercourse with Poseidon and borne the twin sons.

⁷ Mount Parnassus, where the Corycian Cave was sacred to the Nymphs.

F 482-5 are from Melanippe's famous speech (test. i.23-5 and test. ii above):

482 (= 483 N)

MELANIPPE

I am a woman, but I have intelligence.

483 (= 482 N)

<MELANIPPE>

. . . who first proclaimed divine knowledge in accurate prophecies based on the risings of the stars.¹

¹ One of the first references in Greek literature to astrology (actually an import from Babylonia), although astronomical observations had long been used to predict seasons and weather (Hesiod, *Works & Days* 383-7, 414ff.).

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ΜΕΛΑΝΙΠΠΗ

- κούκ ἐμὸς ὁ μῦθος, ἀλλ' ἐμῆς μητρὸς πάρα,
 ὥς οὐρανός τε γαῖά τ' ἦν μορφὴ μία,
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἐχωρίσθησαν ἀλλήλων δίχρα,
 τίκτουσι πάντα κἀνέδωκαν εἰς φάος,
 5 δένδρη, πετεινά, θήρας, οὓς θ' ἄλμη τρέφει,
 γένος τε θνητῶν.

vv. 1–2: Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Art of Rhetoric* 9.11 (cf. test. iia: v. 1 also in 8.10); v. 1 adapted by Plato, *Symposium* 177a.3 (cf. Aristides, *Oration* 2.132) and often elsewhere; vv. 2–6: Diodorus 1.7.7; vv. 2–4: Tzetzes, *Exegesis of Homer's Iliad*. p. 41.18 Hermann; v. 2 (οὐρανός . . . μία) appears amongst Orphic inscriptions on a late antique alabaster bowl (R. Delbrueck, W. Vollgraff, *JHS* 54 [1934], 129–39).

485

ΜΕΛΑΝΙΠΠΗ

εἰ δὲ παρθένος φθαρεῖσα ἐξέθηκε τὰ παιδιά καὶ
 φοβουμένη τὸν πατέρα, σὺ φόνον δράσεις;

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Art of Rhetoric* 9.11 (cf. test. iia above)

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484

MELANIPPE

The account is not my own, but comes from my mother,¹
that Heaven and Earth were once a single form, but when
they were parted from each other into two, they bore and
delivered into the light all things—trees, winged things,
beasts, creatures of the sea, and the race of mortals.² 5

¹ Cf. test. iia and F 481.13–17 above. Hippo was supposed to have taught natural science to Aeolus as well: cf. Clement cited in the apparatus to F 483.

² For the separation of Sky from Earth see especially Hesiod, *Theogony* 154–206, and for Heaven and Earth jointly propagating life Aeschylus F 44, Eur. *Antiope* F 182a and elsewhere (see further on *Chrysippus* F 839).

485

MELANIPPE

But if a girl exposed the children because she had been
raped and was in fear of her father, will you then commit
murder?

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<ΧΟΡΟΣ>

(a) δικαιοσύνας τὸ χρύσειον πρόσωπον

(b) οὐθ' ἔσπερος οὐθ' ἑώος οὕτω θαυμαστός.

(a) Anonymous Commentary on Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1129b28 in CAG XX.210.9; Athenaeus 12.546b (= Aristoxenus F 50 Wehrli); (b) Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 1129b28 with Commentary as for (a). There are several derivative adaptations of both phrases.

487

<ΜΕΛΑΝΙΠΠΗ?>

ὄμνυμι δ' ἱερὸν αἰθέρ', οἴκησιν Διός.

Aristophanes, *Women at the Thesmophoria* 272 with Schol., and Schol. on Aristophanes, *Frogs* 100

(488 N = test. vb (a) above)

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486

<CHORUS>

(a) . . . Justice's golden countenance . . .

(b) Neither evening nor morning (star) is so wonderful.

487

<MELANIPPE?>

I swear by sacred heaven, Zeus's dwelling.

(488 N: see test. vb (a) above)